
Writing for Success

National Board Writing

Claudia Swisher

NBCT

OWP

Fear of Writing?

- *On Writing Well* by Wm Zinsser
 - You'll be writing to a colleague—the teacher down the hall
 - Grammar will not be graded
 - Your work *won't* flow if you're following directions
 - Answer the questions—answer every one fully, as often as it's asked
-

The Writing Process

- Prewriting, drafting, revising, editing
 - Find your style—procrastinator, reflector, reviser?
 - Do you write crummy first drafts or finished ones?
 - Write the questions—then answer them. Then the page isn't blank, and you can answer the questions in your order.
-

-
- Nothing's finished until you decide it's finished
 - Don't sweat the small stuff: word choice, flow, introductions and conclusions, sentences...
 - Write a draft and let it ferment—like fine wine
 - Have several Entries in different stages of the process. Then you can choose what to work on, when.
-

Practice Writing...

- Describe the route you took to drive to Ardmore. Be very specific! Help someone else visualize your route in detail!
- Explain why you took this route; talk about other options you had, and explain why this was your choice.
- Now, write about what you'd do if you had to drive to Ardmore again. Explain why you'd make that decision.

Writing Styles: Descriptive

Descriptive writing is a retelling of what happened in a classroom situation. This kind of writing should allow the reader to visualize and understand what the teacher is describing. It “sets the scene” for the assessors.

Writing Styles: Descriptive

Description is called for when the entry prompt uses verbs like state, list, describe, or uses what or which as the interrogatory opening words. For example:

“What are the relevant features of your teaching setting that influenced your selection of this assessment/prompt and these students?”

Writing Styles: Descriptive

When a teacher is asked to describe, his/her response should meet these criteria:

- ***Accurate and precise enumeration and/or explanation;***
- ***Clear and logical ordering of the elements or features of the event, person, concept, or strategy described; and***
- ***Inclusion of supporting features or elements that would allow an outsider to “see” whatever is described***

Writing Styles: *Analytical*

Analysis depends on the interpretations the teacher made of what happened, examination of why the elements or events described are the way they are. It shows assessors the thought processes the teacher employed to arrive at the conclusions made about a teaching situation.

Writing Styles: Analytical

Analysis is called for when a prompt asks how, why, or in what way(s). Analysis is required when teachers as asked:

- **To identify a particularly successful moment in a sample of teaching and why they regard it as successful**
- **For a rationale: or**
- **What a student performance suggests about their teaching (here the teacher uses the evidence of student work to explain and illustrate his/her practice and also to use his/her practice to explain and provide a context for the student work.**

Writing Styles: Analytical

When a teacher is asked to analyze, his/her response should meet these criteria:

- **The subject of the analysis should be available to the reader (e.g. the student work, the videotape.) If such an artifact is not available, a clear description of what is being analyzed must be given prior to the analysis;**
- **The focus of the writing is not on what happened (descriptive) but rather on why it happened (analytical.)**

Writing Styles: Reflective

Reflection, a particular kind of analysis, always suggests self-analysis, or consideration of practice. Reflection includes written consideration of what a teacher will do next time—based on his/her analysis of what happened and why it happened that way.

Writing Styles: Reflective

Reflection is called for when the entry prompt asks the teachers to consider the successes of their lessons, and what they would do differently and *why*.

Writing Styles: Reflective

When the teacher is asked to reflect, his/her response should meet these criteria:

- **The subject of the analysis should be available to the reader (e.g. the student work, the videotape.) If such an artifact is not available, a clear description of what is being reflected upon must be given prior to the analysis; and**

Writing Styles: Reflective

When the teacher is asked to reflect, his/her response should meet these criteria:

The focus of the writing is not on

- ***what* happened (descriptive) but rather on:**
 - **why it happened (analytical)**
 - **and how it will influence instruction.**
-

Writing-Thinking

- The questions in the Entries will guide you! Read and analyze them carefully.
 - Also check where in the Entries the questions occur—
 - ❑ Descriptive at the beginning, to set the stage
 - ❑ Analytical after descriptive, to let you think about the importance of your work, and why you did what you did
 - ❑ Reflective at the end to lead from this lesson to the next time you teach
-

Nitty-Gritty Tips

- Margins
 - Headers and footers
 - Widows and orphans
 - Fonts
 - Squeezing more words per page
 - Cutting and revising
-

